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ABSTRACT

The paper describes a model to aid curriculum developers as they design futures curricula. The objective is to demonstrate how curricula can be holistic in perspective and balanced in provision for student future-focused role image as well as subject matter. The model, based on symmetry (within the individual and the curriculum), has seven facets: alive, purposive, loving, intelligent, truthful, spiritual, and moral. To be included in a futures curriculum based on symmetry, educational material must meet various criteria including that it is growth producing (alive), helps students set and meet goals (purposive), encourages a loving attitude toward others (love), considers changes in the structure of knowledge (intelligence), is authentic (truthful), sensitizes students to positive attitudes (spirituality), and clarifies impact of one activity or attitude on another (moral). Curriculum content could include war and peace, population and food, resources and development, the environment, economy, politics, science and technology, and terrorism. Suggested activities include involving students in discussing each facet, brainstorming, writing poetry and making murals representing various facets, and compiling lists of symmetrical individuals. (DB)

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A Futures Curriculum for Symmetry

Dr. Leonore W. Dickmann

Traditionally, schools have existed for students. Yet, one might raise the question, "To what extent, has education made real, as its focus, the person in the educational process?" Too often, it seems, the emphasis has been placed on the content.

A futures curriculum must be holistic in perspective, balanced in its provision for the pupil as well as for the subject matter. The student's future-focused role image must assume an importance equal to his pursuit of knowledge.

Today, with a cry of "return to the basics" receiving currency, educators must concern themselves with the broader issue of balance in the curriculum. The question of balance is receiving little press, however. Emphasis has been placed on the "what" of the curriculum rather than on the "who" in the curricular process. The curriculum, though, doesn't exist as a plan separate from the individual. It has as its reason for being, to enhance the completeness of an individual in an educational process. Balance in the curriculum must reflect a concern not only with the "3 R's", but with the completeness, wholeness, symmetry of the person for whom the curriculum is planned.

Symmetry provides a model for considering balance in the curriculum as well as for balance or completeness in the learner.[1] This model presents seven frameworks for expanding the traditional dimensions of curriculum into a pattern for the learner's future-focused role image. It considers the attributes of humankind offering an organization for them, or a construct, that goes beyond limits possible with only cognitive development.

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The Symmetrical Model suggests seven areas of consideration for those engaged in planning, teaching, or evaluating the curriculum in terms of its completeness or balance. These areas are concerned with seven facets of an individual's being. The complete person is viewed as alive, purposive, loving, intelligent, truthful, spiritual, and moral. Provision, then, must be made for fostering each of these seven areas within the individual and within the curriculum. See figure 1.

Seven Facets Of Symmetry With
Attributes Of A Symmetrical Individual

I	II	III	IV
Alive	Spiritual	Purposive	Truthful
healthy	resilient	free	precise
sound	alert	rational	candid
progressive	responsive	lawful	authentic
fresh	joyous	creative	sincere
spontaneous	resourceful	individual	perfect
vital	patient	disciplined	factual
invincible	humoristic	perfectible	honest
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

V	VI	VII
Loving	Moral	Intelligent
peaceful	loyal	intuitive
merciful	courageous	knowledgeable
unselfish	open	understanding
humble	harmonious	judicious
brotherly	optimistic	apperceptive
faithful	pure	visionary
just	good	scientific
etc.	etc.	etc.

Figure 1

Alive As A Framework

To exist, an individual needs life or is alive. Aliveness is therefore an extremely vital quality of a person's being. Too often, however, it is accepted consciously or unconsciously as a given, taken for granted, rather than recognized, cherished, or considered as a valid area of study.

Aliveness, as an area of direct study, provides an interface between the learner and the "what" that is to be learned. If the subject matter is to have personal meaning for the "who" then the curriculum must have life. Conversely, for the learner, curriculum without personal application to a person's life is dead to the learner. It is therefore a function of curriculum developers to plan instructional activities that are alive and that help bring personal meaning to the learner in terms of recognizing and understanding aliveness as an important facet in the development of a future focused role image.

In selecting aliveness as a framework, educators must begin with the basic questions. What elements within the present curriculum are growth producing, fostering vitality? What elements need to be stripped away as not conducive to fostering aliveness, leading instead to apathy, lethargy, deadness?

The teacher who fosters aliveness will help students to be vibrantly in tune to the inner and outer world, keenly aware through each of the senses. Such aliveness will be reflected in openness to being. The person experiences each day fully with eager anticipation, thoughtfully involved, and reflective. Apathy, boredom, lethargy are not even a consideration for the alive individual. Gladness to leave the old for the new, to progress, and to make a contribution to the human scene are foremost to the alive

person who is also alive to his other facets of completeness.

An educational process consumes many years of a person's lifespan. The aliveness of a human being must, therefore, be an important consideration in curricular decisions. Specific learning activities must be identified and planned to intensify the fullness of life for the individual.

The Framework of Purposive

The framework of purposive helps the learner to identify the "what" in his life. He understands himself as a goal-seeking individual with a purpose in living and a purpose for being in school.

At issue then, are the individual's goals, plans, and aims in curricular decisioning. The curriculum has as its focus to help the learner in his purposiveness as a goal seeker. Curriculum becomes truly personalized, individualized, and goal oriented for the learner.

Love As A Framework

Love is a power in human interaction and may be used for increasing power within the curriculum. It has been identified as a basic human need. It is time, then, to view it as basic in the curriculum, not as a thing apart, to be treated in isolation, but as integral - a way of acting, responding, relating - thinking.

Loving must be viewed as central to an individual's wholeness and therefore central to an individual's curriculum plan. Skills of caring, relating, and responding must be valued, taught, and rewarded.

In valuing love as basic, the school's role is to sensitize students to love as a reality. An awareness of the concept of love is a first consideration. Second, the relation of love to other facets of human behavior is noted, and

third, demonstrated behavior is underscored. Learners must be helped to perceive a loving attitude as a basic behavior in their relationships with others.

Intelligence As A Traditional Framework

Intelligence has long had rationality as a prime indicator of a pupil's success with the factual knowledge of the curriculum. It is also the traditional foundation for curriculum planning. Yet, serious omissions have gone almost unnoticed even with the stress that is placed upon intelligence.

These are attributes that cluster comfortably within the framework of intelligent behavior that have scarcely surfaced within a curriculum plan. How much emphasis has been placed upon the visionary, perceptive, or intuitive qualities of learners? How much help have learners been given in understanding these and other such intelligent attributes? It seems that even this area calls for a re-definition.

Studies conducted in Paris at Rene Descartes University point out that "emphasis on academic success and a concept that relates intelligence to factual knowledge and logic have led to the neglect of other important aspects, such as social understanding, and the capacity to deal with both the probable and the uncertain."[2] A curriculum for the future can ill-afford not to help students deal with the probable and the uncertain and manifest social understanding. Such neglect must not continue.

In addition, to plan a curriculum without considering the structure of knowledge with its accelerating change, the nature of the intelligent individual as he copes, the processes by which learning takes place, and the skills for futuristic thinking is to sabotage even this traditional framework for organizing the curriculum. The times, alone, call for a new look at this traditional organizer.

Truthful Framework

Curriculum planners are often reminded of the turthful framework as they plan. The search for truth is held as an objective for an educated person.

A series of questions, however, must be raised for the curriculum planner! What is the relation of truth to a healthy self concept or a future focused role image? Do teachers have the power to make classrooms open arenas for searching into truth and the strength to persevere in the search? Is truth based upon absolutes that should be taught within the schools?

It seems that the framework of truth is a necessary ingredient if the curriculum is to be authentic and relevant. To answer the age old question "What is truth?," however, and to provide for it in the curriculum may be difficult. The exigency of the times mandate truth as a basic framework.

Spirituality As A Framework for Consideration

The cry to make curriculum relevant is a call to apply the framework of the spiritual to the developmental process. Relevance is gained in the transfer of curriculum content into action in the learner's life. It is the spiritual experience planned within the curriculum that moves the learner from the realm of the mundane into the domain of the preferable.

The curriculum can provide a plan for thinking activities with time to reflect upon what is being learned in order to transfer content into one's life history. For example, curriculum with structured silence provides time for the learner to pass cognitive content through an affective filter.

The spiritual framework sensitizes students to attitudes of joy, patience, humor, and resilience. It provides a criterion for teachers to place thinking

and reflecting upon what is taught in a central position within the plan for learning.

It calls for a search for universals that set people apart from the animal instincts and materiality found in life on planet earth.

Moral Criterion As A Framework

The issue of moral education is receiving currency. Parents, teachers, and administrators alike are stressing a need for it. The question is no longer should moral education be included within the school day but rather "how" shall it be included within the curriculum?

Some futurists even warn that with the many social crises of the present, time is of essence in which to decide moral questions of great import to the future - the future in which students in the schools will spend their lives. Realistically, a futuristic emphasis offers an integrative approach to moral education. Such emphasis deals directly with moral issues, problems, and concerns that are integral parts of broader questions based in the present but with implications for the future. For example, a discussion of the social aspects of food - sharing, pollution, and conserving energy can flow naturally from discussion of current events. Such discussion can lead to inquiry in various areas of the curriculum that are content based.

With this natural approach, fragmentation of thought is lessened for students. Moral issues are not seen as separate from the disciplines. They assume their rightful place as topics for analysis within the established curriculum rather than the hidden or incidental. In using a futuristic focus, the danger of overlooking a direct approach to moral education is minimized. Also, the danger of indoctrination and manipulation through a process approach, only, is lessened or negated.

As students identify attitudes held, they can be encouraged to speculate on the consequences of a continuation of these prevailing attitudes. In engaging in trend extrapolation from the news reporting, they can be helped to formulate "What if ..." statements for discussion.

When problems are identified either from the news or in personal experiencing, students can be encouraged to generate hypotheses for testing. "If ... then" statements provide opportunity for reality testing. Manipulation and indoctrination are not easily imposed in an environment of student inquiry and action research that is discipline-based.

Cross-impact analysis, another futuristic technique, offers an excellent framework for an examination of consequences for today's values, choices, and activities. Through checking the effect of one activity on another choice as clarified through using the cross-impact two-axis grid, students have a tool for self-appraisal of interests. Questions can be clarified concerning the impact of one activity on another.

The moral criterion offers a framework concerned with standards of conduct. Classroom management is an inherent part of the curriculum and certainly needs a framework for making explicit the standards of conduct that are conducive for learning within the school millieu. Character development is a constitutional charge that would make the framework important in the eyes of the public. The moral criterion offers the learners a laboratory for making rules of conduct that serve as a cornerstone in a democratic society. The moral framework offers a challenge to curriculum developers in a democratic, multi-cultural society. Further, it calls for students to be involved in that search as an element in design.

With a discrete focus, students are given tools, and skill in using them, for dealing with moral questions rather than to have stencils imposed. Transfer of learning may take on added meaning with the tie to the present concerns as well as implications for the future. With a futuristic emphasis, the affective emotions students hold concerning moral issues can find substantive direction within the skills of reasoning provided through the cognitive areas.

Content Of The Curriculum

The seven frameworks of alive, purposive, loving, intelligent, truthful, spiritual, and moral are organizing centers for providing for the "who" and his focused role image.

The eight broad categories of human concerns provide the "what" or the content:

- War and Peace
- Population and Food
- Resources and Development
- The Environment
- The Economy
- Politics and Government
- Science and Technology
- Terrorism

Curriculum, then, becomes powerful as a check and balance of a purposive individual in terms of "War and Peace", a loving individual in terms of "The Environment" and a moral individual in terms of "Science and Technology".

The seven frameworks of the symmetrical individual and the eight broad categories provide an holistic perspective for viewing curriculum as a plan to help students move toward completeness as human beings in the human scene.

25 STARTER STRATEGIES TO FOSTER AN UNDERSTANDING OF SYMMETRY

-- Have students generate questions concerning each facet as leads for study

-- Let students brainstorm activities for dealing with each facet

-- Help students to make a mural for the seven facets

-- Ask students to write poetry for the facets

-- Invite students to compile annotated bibliographies for books read citing relationship to symmetry

-- Start students collecting quotations in which attributes of symmetry are used

-- Tell students to design posters concerning symmetry

-- Give students materials to construct bulletin boards around the symmetrical theme

-- Guide students in suggesting additional attributes for each facet

-- Involve students in clipping news articles that mention any facet or attribute of symmetry

-- Start students in the design of original games for symmetry

-- Provide students with the opportunity to make mobiles for the facets

-- Suggest students express a facet of symmetry through any media they choose

- paintings
- modeling clay
- sculpting
- etc.

-- Have students write an original story

-- Encourage students to invent, design, contrive, compose, plan activities with any or all kinds of media for symmetry

- color
- tone
- movement
- space
- time
- words
- images
- world of force
- organization
- social relationships
- contemplation

-- Start students in hypothesizing concerning each facet

-- Have students read biographies to discuss individuals in terms of their symmetry

-- Let students role play incidents depicting an attribute and its opposite

-- Suggest students keep a journal of their symmetrical deeds

-- Start students collecting pictures for the facets and attributes for personal or a class scrapbook

-- Ask students to compile a listing of symmetrical individuals

-- Encourage students to design a 1 year, 5 year, 10 year plan for their symmetrical development

-- Ask students to appraise their own symmetry for each facet on a continuum from 1 to 5

-- Ask students to suggest songs for each facet or write their own

FOOTNOTES

[1]Edward Weisse, Leonore W. Dickmann, and Kenneth Morrison, The Symmetrical Teacher: An Introduction to American Education (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1976)

[2]John E. Gibson, "Does Your Mind Affect Your Behavior?", Family Weekly Magazine in Oshkosh Weekend Northwestern, October 7, 1979, p. 23.

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